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West Hartford Wins Two Power Of Change Awards For Energy Efficiency Efforts



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WEST HARTFORD —



The town's "Top Town Hall Building" Power of Change award statue and certificate are seen on Town Manager Ronald Van Winkle's desk. (Julie Stagis/jstagis@courant.com / May 22, 2013)

The town and school district received top honors at Tuesday's Power of Change municipal awards ceremony for their energy-saving efforts.

The town earned "Top Town Hall" and the schools took first in the Innovation category in the first year of the awards, according to a news release.

"The winning municipal energy efficiency projects were celebrated as models for their energy-saving approaches and achievement in municipal buildings," according to the release. "As Top Town Hall, West Hartford Town Hall received First Honors for its full-building lighting retrofit, which has seen nearly 17 percent reduction in energy consumption over the first six months of project completion."

The school district was honored for its annual Energy Conservation Challenge, which since 2009 has challenged students at each school to reduce energy use by 3 percent over a certain period of time – in 2012, it was one week.

This year, more than 11 of the town's 16 schools reached that goal, with "many schools more than doubling" it, according to the release. "Since the start of the Energy Conservation Challenge in 2009, West Hartford Public Schools has seen an overall decrease in both electric and natural gas energy use of about 8 percent."

"The spirit and creativity exhibited by the entire school system particularly impressed the awards committee," according to the release.

The Power of Change Awards were established by the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation, the Hampshire Foundation and the Common Sense Fund in partnership with the state. It aims to "build on" the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's "Lead By Example" program.

"The Power of Change Awards celebrate good government practices that protect human health, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and in the process, help the Connecticut economy and save taxpayer dollars," Tremain Foundation President Stewart Hudson said in the release.

"We created the Power of Change Award first as an opportunity to encourage more state and municipal leaders to make important investments in their future, and also as an occasion to give energy efficiency leaders their due recognition," he said. The "winners demonstrate Connecticut's leadership and innovation in energy efficiency – they are prime examples of how our municipalities are taking an active role in advancing a clean energy economy."

For more information on the awards, visit <http://www.powerofchangeaward.org>.

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